

3/9/71

Dear Cyril,

Every development convinces me that the Government is really up tight on my suit for pictures of the clothing. Today they dumped another paper on me, an "Opposition", carefully omitting the date of service, I suspect in the hope I'll default. In the event that, knowing there is no postmarking of franks, they are hoping to entrap me into or contrive a default, I've written them asking the information and informing them I just got the papers today, with a copy to the judge's secretary. If I understand the rules, their time for any response expired on the 3rd, the tenth day. If they filed it then (and I was neither asked about nor informed of an extension), my time is about up now and will be before I can prepare and retype it. Nice people.

Just today I got a copy of the decision against John. I'll read it when I can. Even a non-lawyer could see the end, and I did. He can't be helped and he won't listen. The loss is unfortunate, but carrying it further would be more unfortunate for he was on a very weak legal ground of his own selection. I seriously misjudged him and his lack of basic integrity when I first heard from and then met him. He is eaten by ego and dominated by his own arrogance. What I am saying is that it is more than just the rigidity of the government in this case. They'll oppose all of us vigorously, but he made it easy for them.

On the Tenn. Legislative investigation, I have made a kind of progress. The chairman has written me that he will hold off on press releases for at least a week until he can consult again with the member who will also be the general counsel (I called this judge as prosecutor to him). The problem is that the lawyer is a potential Garrison, with the best of intentions and what I think I detect as an irresponsible, publicity-seeking approach. As I would not consciously involve myself in something like this, so also would I not encourage you to. However, if it emerges as a serious study befitting the Committee on Government Operations, I'll do whatever I can and I think there is something you can. That is to evaluate the relevant testimony and the autopsy and the representation of the autopsy in the ministerial record and render an expert opinion. Aside from correcting an incredibly inaccurate record in this case and all that means, and aside from striking a blow for the integrity of your profession in which I think all your responsible peers would rejoice, I think there is a potentially valuable by-product in limning the character of the JFK autopsy in an official proceeding. Therefore, I'd appreciate it if you would write me a letter in which you do not commit yourself and in which you do hedge and stipulate conditions so I can show it to the chairman, a non-lawyer. If you agree, please begin by saying that as I know, your existing commitments are so great you have had to withdraw from some to do justice to those where your greater professional responsibilities lie, then say that you would not knowingly associate yourself ~~the~~ with anything like happened in New Orleans or with what was calculated to serve a publicity rather than a genuine legislative purpose, but if the facts are as I have represented them to you about the autopsy and the relevant testimony, you think your profession should be interested, that you personally would be interested in the rectification of error and the satisfactory solution to so great a crime, and that to the degree it was then possible for you, you would be willing to offer any help you might to a legislative study of the manner in which the institutions of government worked in this time of great crisis. If you can't, okay. Thanks,

Best,